

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

Sovereign Pontiff, in the name of Catherine, in order to mitigate his indignation." The friar was apparently to dispose the Pope in favour of the two Florentine ambassadors, who were already on their way. He started about the fourth week in March, accompanied by Giovanni Tantucci, Felice da Massa, and others of Catherine's household, with the letter of credentials from Catherine to the Pope which we still possess, beseeching the wavering Pontiff to make himself, with the aid of divine grace, the instrument for the pacification of the entire world. She bids him, in the name of Christ crucified, extirpate the evil pastors and rulers, "full of impurity and cupidity, puffed up with pride," the foul plants who are poisoning the garden of the Church; and plant in their stead ^{<c} sweet smelling flowers, pastors and governors who will be true servants of Jesus Christ, who will attend to nought else save the honour of God and the salvation of souls, and who will be fathers of the poor." Hitherto, the luxurious lives of the prelates have been shamed by comparison with the virtues of many of the laity: "But it seems that the supreme and eternal Goodness is having done by force what has not been done for love; it seems that He is allowing states and pleasures to be taken from His Spouse, as though to show that He wished Holy Church to return into her primitive state of poverty, humility, meekness, as she was in that holy time, when they attended to nought else save the honour of God and the salvation of souls, caring for spiritual things and not temporal. For, since she has aimed more at temporal than at spiritual things, her affairs have gone from bad to worse." But let the Pope take heart and fear nothing; if only he will come to Italy and raise the standard of the Cross, all will be well. But he must come like a meek lamb, "using the arms of the power of love alone, aiming only to have the care of spiritual things":—

"Answer the summons of God, who is calling you to come to hold and possess the place of the glorious pastor St. Peter, whose vicar you are. Lift up the banner of the holy Cross. Come, and you will reform the Church with good pastors. You will give her back the colour of most burning charity